Palanpur : Here the plots have been demarcated, although no plot has been allotted so far. Light Engineering Manufacturing Units and household furniture units are expected to come up at this Growth Centre.

Target of export for current year

3114. SHRIMATI N. P. DURGA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the exports of the Country have registered an upward trend in current year;

0?) if so, the figures of export for first nine months of the current financial year as compared to the corresponding period of last year;

(c) the target for the current financial year; and

(d) other details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The value of India's exports of merchandise goods was US$ 38.11 billion in the first nine months of the current financial year registering a growth of 20.36% as compared to the corresponding period in the previous year.

(c) A target of 12% has been fixed for export of merchandise goods for 2002-03.

(d) The growth rate of exports witnessed is far above the target of 12% for the current financial year. During the current financial year export performance has been quite satisfactory, though the World Economic and Trade Outlook has not been encouraging. This is evident from the export value of US$ 46.07 billion achieved during the period April to February, 2002-03 registering a growth rate of 16.76% over corresponding period of previous year.

Export of flowers

3115. SHRI M. V RAJASEKHARAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Southern District of Karnataka are growing good export quality flowers;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to start flower auction centre to facilitate flower export to international destinations; and

(c) the incentives extended to develop flower sector as a commercially viable sector to Karnataka fanners?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) Yes. Sir.

(b) Government has sanctioned Rs. 3.57 crores for setting up of a flower auction centre at Bangalore to facilitate export of flowers to international destinations.

(c) Incentives extended in this regard include.—

> Financial assistance by Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) to exporters for various activities such as prefeasibility studies, development of infrastructure, export promotion and market development, packaging development, promotion of quality and quality control, organisation building and HRD and research and development.

> Marketing facilitation centre at Netherlands for market feedback enabling better price realisation.

> Cold storage and cargo handling facility at Bangalore Airport.

MoU on trade between Singapore and India

3116. SHRI MURLIDEORA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a MoU on trade has been signed between Singapore and India;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether a Joint Study Group has been set up to boost trade and investment;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the benefits accrued to the country as a result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIVPRATAP RUDY): (a)to (e) In pursuance of abilateral agreement on 8 April, 2003 between the Prime Ministers of the two countries, an India-Singapore Joint Study Group was established to study the benefits of an India-Singapore Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA). The Joint Study Group submitted its report and a Declaration of Intent was signed by the Trade Ministers of both the countries during the visit of the Prime Minister